POLI 2051-1 American Government
Professor Christopher Kenny
Fall 2015 T/TH 9:00-10:20; 103 Design Building
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Office Hours: 10:30-12:00 T/TH and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to acquaint you with the fundamentals of American government and politics; to
improve your skills in evaluating and analyzing issues in American politics. The class will be organized into
four main sections. The first describes the foundations of our American system including the Constitution
and federalism. The second section examines public opinion and the role that parties, interest groups, and
the media play in the political process. The third section covers voting, campaigns, elections and the US
Congress, Presidency, and Executive branch. The final section looks at the courts and questions concerning
the democratic nature of our government (civil liberties and rights). In this final section we will also read
the book *Hardball*, which describes how the game of politics is really played. Throughout the course we
will keep in mind the general education goal that, “*LSU graduates will demonstrate an understanding of the
informing factors of global interdependence, including economic forces, political dynamics, and cultural and linguistic
difference.*”

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Four exams will be given in this class. Each is worth 150 points. All reading materials and lectures are fair
game. Questions coming from the reading materials will primarily focus on the key concepts identified in
the text in boldface type (also list in the deck of cards at the end of the chapter in REVEL). The format of
the exams and quizzes will be discussed prior to the first test. The dates for readings and exams are listed on
moodle. Your grade will be determined as follows:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Score Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>582 – 600</td>
<td>A+</td>
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<tr>
<td>558 – 581</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>540 – 557</td>
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<td>378 – 401</td>
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<td>360 – 377</td>
<td>D-</td>
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<td>Below 360</td>
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Class attendance is expected. It is quite possible that the lectures will contain material not found in either of
the books, and that not all of the reading material will be covered in lectures. In addition, attending class can
earn you bonus points. On random days throughout the semester you will be asked to give your opinion on
various controversies in American politics. These "attendance checks" are worth 1 point each and can be
added directly to your total. It is therefore in your interest to attend class as often as possible. You can also
earn bonus points by participating in a certain number of REVEL activities. These will be discussed the first
week of class.
TEXTBOOKS

Required texts for this class:


Hardball by Christopher Matthews.